

REMARKS

Claims 42 – 51 are pending and under consideration in the above-identified application, and Claim 1 – 41 and 52 – 54 were previously cancelled.

In the Office Action, Claims 42 – 51 were rejected.

In this Amendment, Claims 42 – 44 and 46 are amended. No new matter has been introduced as a result of this Amendment.

Accordingly, Claims 42 – 51 are at issue.

I. 35 U.S.C. § 112 Indefiniteness Rejection of Claims

Claims 42 – 51 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

As requested by the Examiner, Applicants have appropriately amended Claim 42 so as to recite “the molecular weight of said high molecular material being greater than about 10,000 and less than about 1,000,000.”

Applicants have also appropriately amended Claim 42 to clarify the parts of the high molecular material.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the claim rejections be withdrawn.

II. 35 U.S.C. § 103 Obviousness Rejection of Claims

Claims 42-51 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 0818474, EP 0818420 and Inagaki et al. in view of DE 444032, Elfine, Monick et al., Horton and Ramirez, et al. Although Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, Claim 42 has been amended to clarify the invention and remove any ambiguities that may have been at the basis of this rejection.

Claim 1 is directed to a cleansing method. The cleansing method comprises (a) providing a cleansing processing agent in a solid state which is *non-water soluble* and comprises a high molecular material having an acrylonitrile unit and a unit selected from the group consisting of styrene, conjugated diene, and a combination thereof, *the molecular weight of the high molecular material is greater than about 1000 and less than about 20,000,000*, hydrophilic groups are

introduced into said *high molecular material* by adding an acid or an alkali thereto, *ionic groups* are introduced into said high molecular material, *such that said high molecular material comprises more than about 5 mol% and less than about 95 mol% of said ionic groups*, the high molecular material comprises 20 to 95 mol% of said unit selected from the group consisting of styrene, conjugated diene and a combination thereof, (b) contacting said agent with a material to be cleaned the material to be cleaned containing at least one of a heavy metal, ammonia, and amine compound, and (c) absorbing the at least one of a heavy metal, ammonia, and an amine compound from the material to be cleaned, *thereby forming a solid content containing the at least one of a heavy metal, ammonia, and an amine compound.*

That is, the cleansing processing agent, provided in a non-water soluble solid state and having a high molecular material, is put into contact with a material to be cleaned, which contains at least one of a heavy metal, ammonia, and amine compound. Further, as claimed the cleansing processing agent absorbs the at least one of a heavy metal, ammonia, and an amine compound from the material to be cleaned, to form a solid content containing the absorbed elements.

In contrast, none of the cited references discloses a non water-soluble cleansing agent which has a high molecular material.

In EP 0818474 and U.S. patent 6,022,928, Inagaki discloses that (emphasis added):

“Another object of the present invention is to provide a method of *manufacturing a water-soluble polyelectrolyte* having larger molecular weight.”

Also, EP 0818420 discloses in the Objects and Summary of the Invention section that (emphasis added):

“The invention intends to provide a *polymer electrolyte which dissolves sufficiently readily in water.*”

Thus, the cited references fail to teach or suggest a cleansing processing agent which is non-water soluble solid and has a high molecular material. As such, Claim 42 is patentable over the cited references, taken singly or in combination with each other, as are dependent Claims 43 – 51, for at least the same reasons.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the claim rejections be withdrawn.

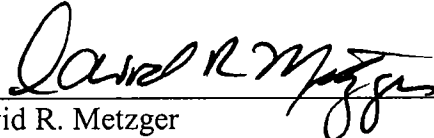
III. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that all claims are clearly allowable over the cited prior art, and respectfully requests early and favorable notification to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

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